# Vendor Verbal Vomit

Selected from the writing of Boyd Camak (boydcamak.wordpress.com), 2023–2026. The words are his.

—A bot

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# Sections

## I was born into a wounded world

If we say the baseline is the person who can work, maintain relationships, and find meaning—and we treat those in extreme suffering as deviations from this norm whose perspective is distorted—we are making a violent philosophical choice. We are saying their experience doesn't count in defining what it means to be human. They become expendable, cannon fodder, acceptable losses whose testimony we can bracket off when determining the truth about human existence.

We recognize that the dreams that we had cannot be fulfilled, and/or if they are fulfilled, that they're fulfilled partially. And we realize that even if our dreams were filled completely, that we would still be utterly miserable. I think one of the reasons why Jesus says that the gate is narrow and while few find the kingdom, few find peace, is twofold. Number one, it's very painful. It's very deflating. It's tragic. It's crushing to recognize the true predicament of being human, how nothing will satisfy us.

The human condition is severe, it's tragic, it's desperate, it's dangerous, and Christ has given us a way out and the way out was not easy for him to create. He required his life, his birth life, and death, a bloody vicious death, horribly painful death. It took Jesus, his entire life, it took Jesus, his entire commitment to create the conditions, to create the possibility of us being saved from the human condition.

I was born into a wounded world. Upon birth I myself was wounded. And I continued to be wounded every day. I was wounded by other wounded people. The wounded people that were wounding me did not know that they were wounded. They also did not know that the world is wounded.

The brutal truth is that something is deeply deeply wrong about the human experience—both externally and internally. And there is *nothing* that we can do about it until we face it *directly*.

The gospel is that the life and death of Christ *is* God's facing it directly *as one of us,* which allows us to face life directly *as god.*

Productivity systems often stop working. Sometimes the collapse is sudden. Sometimes it's gradual enough to be mistaken for personal failure. Sometimes the system appears to function for years before quietly giving way under conditions it was never designed to hold.

The Psalms and all of their encouragement are not speaking to middle class, modern middle class Americans or modern middle class people from any country; they're speaking to the poor, they're speaking to those who are suffering under tyrants, and the rich, and the proud, and the well-connected, and the powerful. If we find ourselves poor, if we find ourselves kicked aside by economic forces, then we are in the very same place that the Psalmist was. We find our souls full of the scorn of the rich, the disdain of the proud, so we know that these Psalms speak directly to us.

As we get older, often many of us encounter the world in all its ways, aggression, greed, fear, contempt, jockeying for position, making our identity based on our accomplishments or our job titles. Pretty soon we find ourselves trapped in a system, or as we tech bros would say, an ecosystem that completely enslaves us and completely overrides or suppresses that innocent child-like way of interacting with the world. As far as I can tell, that way is innocent and brings joy.

## A dead man on a tree

Attention scholars and philosophers and theologians: shut the f*&^ up and look at this outrageous scandalous barbaric execution of the God-man. The cross is not a hallmark greeting card symbol—it is a lynching tree, an electric chair. The excruciating embarrassing awkward shameful electrocution/lynching/crucifixion of Jesus. Of Jesus! The one man that lived a life of integrity and love to the fullest. That is what reveals who God is.

Any meaning…any coherent meaning with any wholeness…is that which is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. God speaks to His children through the life and death of Christ. The resurrection is God's grace that enables us to understand, appropriate, and live that Word.

We can speculate and project all day and all night about what God is. But, according to our tradition anyway, where is the one place that we know that we see God? The one place that we know that we see God is on the cross. God's power is the power of suffering love.

Any linguistic explanation of the problem of evil is going to be worse than the evil itself. The best thing we have is a cross to look at the crucifix. The only answer is a dead man on a tree.

The part that struck me the most was the crowning of thorns, the crowning of thorns. And this is where they heap shame, they heap shame on Jesus. They're basically saying, you're a failure, not just that you failed, but you are a failure. And the fact that you can't do anything about this situation you're in shows that you aren't who you say you are, which implicitly says that you're not who God says you are.

Jesus' death in the cross is permanent. It is permanent, and it is ongoing, and we can latch on to it, and there's a tradition of doing that. It's a messy tradition, but there are people who have found hope in Christ, and it's the same way 2,000 years ago as it is now.

The cross isn't a tragic detour on the way to resurrection. It's the unveiling of what this world does to perfect love. It's what reality looks like when you strip away the anesthesia.

When our theologies fall apart when our scholastic ivory towers of intellectual gymnastics fall apart as they do and I would say they always fall apart in the foxhole of life we have to return to the word incarnate made flesh and how we what we did to him and that is the revelation of the gospel. That is what we did to the Lord incarnate but that is the terrible news of the gospel. But this crucifixion also reveals the good news of the gospel which is that God still loves us.

## Grab the life ring

I'm drowning existentially. This Jesus guy is throwing this life ring to me. Am I going to grab it or am I going to contemplate the labeling and the composition of the life ring? No, I'm going to grab the life ring because I'm drowning.

When I inhale Lord and exhale Christ, I'm, I'm literally breathing Christ in and out, or more appropriately, Christ is breathing Christ in and out in me. My whole being, my whole organism is somehow the same as Christ's organism. It's Him and it's me at the same time. You can't really dissect one from the other.

It's not a perfect analogy, but the creed is kind of like a menu. It tells us what is being served—and what isn't. What is being served is the life of Christ. The problem is when I start analyzing that menu rather than facing the mystery. I get up on a high horse about my analysis and my theological insights, rather than staring at a crucified/nitrogen asphyxiated dead man and meditating on what he taught in word and deed, and eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

Biblical belief is closer to trust. To believe is to rely. To grab the life ring. To step onto the bridge while still afraid. Grab the life ring is not convincing oneself of propositions; it is entrusting oneself to Christ amid uncertainty and fear.

I believe that Christ is the truth, with a capital T, and that anyone who is pursuing truth is pursuing Christ, whether they know it or not. This is also known as the concept of the anonymous Christian, a somewhat unsatisfactory label that Rahner himself was open to editing. If you're pursuing the truth you're pursuing Christ whether you know it or not.

Just like the incarnation was the eternal God crashing into finite contingent reality in order to heal it, I need the Psalms to crash into my brain, and hopefully my heart, so that I can have at least some stability as I start the day in a house with young children. Now is any of this "biblical"? I have no idea. To me, it is a meaningless question.

We don't have to be spiritual masters in order to achieve peace. Everything has been bestowed on us—allowing us to escape the default mentality of the human condition which leads to anxiety and despair. Jesus said that He is the Way. He didn't say that He is a pop quiz.

I have a hunch that what he really means is praying without surrendering, or praying without trusting, or praying without being all in. In other words, if one is going to appropriate, if that's the correct word, probably not the correct word, but if one is going to be open to God's help, one has to surrender to God. It's not a test. It's not a membership passcode, but rather it is inherent in being able to make oneself able to be helped.

## Stay crucified

He says that the deeper the knowledge, the deeper the suffering. That's the price. That's why we flee from knowledge. That's why we don't want to know the truth—because it will crucify us.

We can literally attach our sufferings to Christ. We become Christ we eat his flesh drink his blood in the sacraments we complete his sufferings. And so I think it's Hopko said we're co-crucified we're also co-resurrected.

The way that God is found is by God's fire burning the hell out of you over and over and over, just like he talks about the potter and the clay. In my experience anyway, God has burned the hell out of me over and over and over with different really hard crosses and experiences, and that has refined me, and that is what has subtracted things from me. Things have been burned off by God, that is how they've been subtracted, not by doing it myself or trying to do it myself.

My suffering is linked to Christ's suffering. Scripture says we "complete the sufferings of Christ". That means our pain is part of the world's redemption. The more life throws at us, the closer we come to Christ.

There is a certain peace that comes with a constellation of problems that is impenetrable by human effort and analysis-even when shared with trusted friends. A situation that forces me to be still and reject repetitive analysis or self-driven problem solving. Don't try to fix something that can't be fixed. Just sit with it and be crucified and stay close to the Lord and recognize that this is not unusual.

Honestly, this whole reflection about the impossibility of my brain surgery situation is rather encouraging because I believe that the only way to draw closer to God is through suffering. I just know, in my experience, all the books I've read, all the devotions I've done did not bring me to a knowledge of God like suffering has. I suppose that the scriptures and the other things I've done on my journey helped me to receive that suffering in a way that led to knowledge.

Wounded apples must be dipped in honey—not dried out and optimized. Grace is not a technique. It does not replace clinical care. It names a different category of healing, one that begins precisely where checklists end.

My faith is that God will resurrect me existentially, literally, metaphorically, every which way. I do think that existence is, is hellish by definition. But not entirely. There's a glimmer. There's a hope. And that, that hope, that is what the resurrection is about.

## Internal freedom

There is a reason why the Way (Christianity) was persecuted to the point of death—starting with Jesus—by the religious elite and by the government. It was a threat—not by force—but by internal liberation from external threats—even threats of torture and death—or of divine punishment. It was a Way that freed even peasants—no especially peasants—to face the emperor, to face the human projections of God, to face poverty, loss, fear and all manner of external circumstances or fear of potential circumstances—with peace, joy, and self possession.

Christianity is not a religion. Christ taught a Way of living that embraces suffering and leads to internal freedom—including internal freedom from unjust/corrupt external authority including—maybe even especially—religious authority/religious abuse—that would seek to control us, to shame us, to manipulate us, to scare us—etc.

Loving our enemy frees us from resentment and aligns us with the love of God for all His children—an extreme love that reveals our true identity and exposes the empty promises and insidious deceptions of the father of lies.

If I am a slave of Christ and have thereby the peace of Christ—then and only then—I am internally free/un-shackled (from reactivity, the passions, etc.) to love my enemies and not perpetuate the cycle of violence—including co-dependency. Otherwise I am a pinball—batted around from situation, to insult, to accusation, to hardship, to mirages of pleasure and escape, to empty promises and back.

That's why Jesus says he came to bring a sword. He cut out the worldly prestige he cut out the desire for money and power. He cut out the desire to win the the praise of men for being charitable in some way that our society defines us as good.

The Buddhist sees clinging and sets out to release it. The Christian is undone by the Spirit and learns to stop clinging. Both are freed—but only one was sought before the search began.

"Turn the other cheek" is not about being nice. It’s about having the interior freedom to say—I am not going to let your psycho/spiritual/emotional pathology set the terms of our interaction. Don't believe me? Strike me on the other cheek as well.

If you choose to be governed by God, you are essentially making yourself unavailable for use by others. Because if God owns your every moment, then no one else can dictate what those moments should be used for. That's the glorious liberty of the children of God.

## The sacredness of the tacky

Like Saint Joseph, I have to provide for my family, keep them from danger-maybe move to a new area and find a new job (flight to Egypt, settling in Nazareth). I have to stay attuned to the spirit even amid the chaos of young children (including a non-verbal special needs child). My family needs me. I will follow the model of Saint Joseph.

I don't know how long I sat there silently grumbling until I woke up from my self-absorption and started looking at all of the people around me—talking to each other about things that normal people talk about and generally having a good time. God is not to be found in abstraction and speculation, or at least not primarily there. God is to be found first of all in a flesh-and-blood human being-Jesus-and all of the other flesh and blood humans that He loves to the extreme--even me.

The Christian Industrial Complex has successfully SEO'd the gospel itself. When someone types "existential despair Christianity" into Google-a desperate, 2am search-they don't get the life ring. They get curated answers from organizations with marketing budgets, content designed to drive you back into the institution, and polished theology that obscures the actual drowning.

I agree with Christians who aren't interested in #socialjustice. I'm interested in social injustice. h/t the Apostle James.

This idea of Western Civilization is a cultural artifact that is completely irrelevant to our lives as Christ's children. It has no more relevance than any other incidental fact in the world. It only seems more important because of its proximity to us physically and in time.

In many ways this is a giving up of worrying or wondering what God's next action or my next step is going to be. Surrendering the need to try to explain everything. My next step revealed by the Holy Spirit may not visibly connect to "the plan," even if I think that it is God's plan for me that he has shown me. It might not even seem like a "step" at all.

I manage my career because that's what it takes to survive, not to get an accolade. Although surviving usually results in accolades because that's the kind of performance it takes to keep a job. And of course, there's a lot of conflict between Christ's kingdom and working for corporations, and there's no way to resolve that.

Hot take: I could make a pretty good case for coffee hour as a sacrament. Incarnational anointing/laying on of hands (hugs) and kindness is a way that Christ heals internal, psychological, existential, emotional, intellectual wounds.

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# Twenty Lines

1. The trouble with self-reliance is the self I'm relying on.
2. Mustard seeds don't grow on platforms.

3. The gospel is completely irrelevant to my life.
4. Icons are family photos.
5. I don't resent or envy the rich and powerful. I pity them.
6. The #gospel is not a formula.
7. What is worse—death…or fear of death?
8. The cross is a crime scene.
9. God is the encounter we can't control.
10. We don't have to walk on eggshells with God.
11. You know sometimes it feels like God should be asking us for forgiveness.
12. There is no answer. Just a bloody corpse.
13. God for sale. Inquire within.
14. I cannot be for Jesus and for empire.
15. The first form of resistance is telling the truth.
16. Jesus is not your personal lord and savior—at least that's not all He is.
17. The only sane way through the human condition is the Way of the cross.
18. Life's a bitch, then you die.
19. Stay positive. = Stay delusional.
20. You cannot kill a crucified God.

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# FINAL NOTE

These words were pulled from a larger archive. A bot did the arranging. The words are his.